

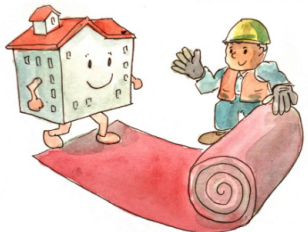
# Streamlining Momentum

2023 Impact Report



[cayimby.org](https://cayimby.org)

SB423



AB1633



AB976



SB684



# Letter from Brian

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## Brian Hanlon

CEO and Co-Founder  
California YIMBY

The YIMBY movement continues to make giant strides in making our cities more affordable, sustainable, accessible, and equitable, and for the growing group of pro-housing activists who support California YIMBY, 2023 was no exception: Our volunteers, coalition partners, and supporters helped us deliver yet another standout year for state housing legislation.

Our legislative agenda largely focused on strengthening

some successful housing laws already on the books, such as those encouraging building ADUs and holding cities accountable to state housing law. AB 976, which California YIMBY sponsored with Asm. Phil Ting, permanently removes owner occupancy requirements for ADUs, which will make it easier for homeowners to finance them. We also worked with Asm. Ting to co-sponsor AB 1633 which will prevent cities like San Francisco from misusing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to skirt their housing responsibilities under the Housing Accountability Act (HAA).

One of the most powerful affordable housing laws in recent history, Sen. Scott Wiener's SB 35 from 2017, has led to the construction of tens of thousands of subsidized affordable homes across our state – but the law was set to expire in 2026. We worked with Sen. Wiener to co-sponsor SB 423, which extends the law through 2036 – and expands it to cover more mixed-income projects, including within the coastal zone.

In addition to these major policy wins, we've long had our eye on expanding affordable homeownership opportunities to communities of color, who have been disproportionately shut out of the dream of home ownership. Working with our partners in the Housing Working Group and Sen. Anna Caballero, we co-sponsored SB 684 to legalize and expedite the construction of naturally affordable homes. We're hopeful that this law will unleash a surge of townhomes, condos, and bungalow courts, and enable a new generation of Californians, especially people of color, to become homeowners.

Of course, none of our legislation can advance without an informed and committed base of pro-housing activists, policy makers, and allies. To paint a broader picture of our vision of a California that is genuinely for everyone, we published, for the first time, a comprehensive, California YIMBY policy framework. The framework is largely informed by our experience passing major housing legislation, but it also builds on our growing

body of research that shows the types of reforms that are needed to ensure we incentivize economically feasible homebuilding opportunities.

We're proud of the successes we've achieved and know that none of it would be possible without the support, passion, and commitment of our allies and partners. And we know that much work remains to be done. We're counting on you, the lifeblood of the YIMBY movement, to continue the steady drumbeat of "Yes" that is moving more of our local and state officials to say YES to more housing, YES to economic opportunity, YES to sustainable and inclusive communities, and YES In My Back Yard!



*Brian Hanlon*

# Overview

## Legislation and Lobbying

Passed four pieces of legislation that extend and improve SB 35, limit CEQA abuse, incentivize ADUs, and streamline infill “starter” homes. Helped partners pass YIMBY and single-stair bills. Expanded the lobbying power of our coalition, especially the Housing Working Group.

## Evidence That Past Reforms Are Working

Laws passed over the last few years, like adjustments to the Housing Accountability Act and laws supporting ADUs - which now account for nearly 20% of all new housing units across California - are producing real results, providing justification for future reforms.

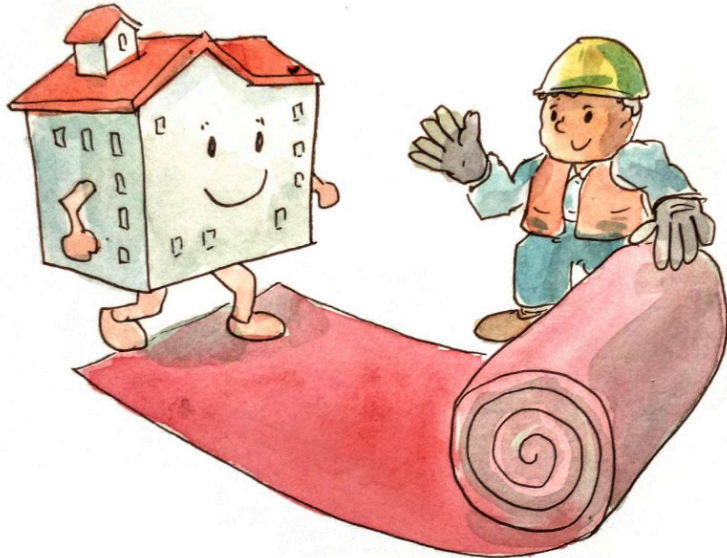
## Evidence-based Policy Development

Published multiple wide-ranging reports that identified the current capacity of housing development in California, the systemic blocks to housing specifically in the Los Angeles Metro and developed a comprehensive Policy Framework that will serve California YIMBY for years to come.





# SB423



Since its passage in 2017, **SB 35** has become an engine of subsidized affordable housing production, leading to the quick approval of over 18,000 new homes.

The law was set to expire in 2026. **SB 423** ensures that low-income housing will continue to be streamlined, while expanding the provisions of SB 35 to qualify more mixed-income housing developments for expedited approval.

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When you’re in the foxhole on a major housing fight like **SB 423**, success often comes down to bold and nimble partners like California YIMBY. In every committee hearing and rally and staff briefing, they were there, guiding policy and mobilizing grassroots support to encourage lawmakers to take strong pro-housing votes. We’ve got a long way to go to tackle California’s housing crisis, but thanks to California YIMBY we’re well on the way to doing what was once thought impossible.

**Senator Scott Wiener**



# AB976 & AB1633



## AB 976

This bill permanently prohibits local governments from imposing an owner occupancy requirement

for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Such mandates make it very difficult to secure financing to build ADUs.



## AB 1633

This important measure ends a loophole that allowed cities to evade the Housing Accountability Act (HAA) by indefinitely deferring housing approval by requiring further CEQA study.

**AB 1633** specifies that the wrongful denial or withholding of a CEQA clearance violates the HAA. This bill is a straightforward solution that ends a common abuse of CEQA, which allowed NIMBY cities

to block new housing developments that had already been found in compliance with local and state land use and environmental regulations.

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California YIMBY was a critical voice in the passage of key housing legislation. Their forward thinking and solution based advocacy made them a valued partner as **AB 976** and **AB 1633** went through the legislative process.

Assemblymember Phil Ting



# SB684



This bill requires local agencies to ministerially approve subdivision maps for specified projects in urban areas that include 10 or fewer housing units.

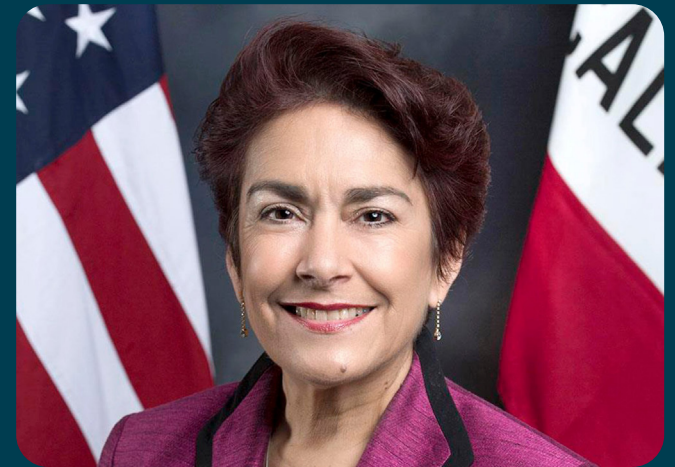
**SB 684** will help expedite the construction of townhomes, bungalow courts, condos, and other 'missing-middle' housing. Building more

homes for ownership is essential to ensuring that middle-class families have an opportunity to build generational wealth.

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This past year, California YIMBY has been a beacon of hope in our mission to elevate homeownership, especially among people of color. Together, we are building not just houses, but futures - empowering communities, fostering equity, and ensuring that the Californian Dream shines brightly for every family.

Senator Anna Caballero





# AB835 (Lee)

Many of the world's most beautiful and livable apartments are "single stair" buildings, meaning that each unit has one stairwell to the outside.

This bill requires the State Fire Marshal to research standards for single-exit apartment houses, and then provide a report.

We hope this report will help modernize California's building code, so that homebuilders can construct fire-safe apartments with cross-ventilation, abundant sunlight, and on challenging parcels.



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**AB 835** sparked an important discussion about how building code reform can improve how we build homes and develop infill projects in California. Implementing *Point Access Block* reform would create more attractive buildings and greatly impact the cost, quality, sustainability, and livability of apartments statewide, helping us create walkable, affordable communities in our city's vibrant neighborhoods.

**Ed Mendoza** - Policy Director, Livable Communities Initiative



# SB4



This bill advances the “Yes in God’s Back Yard” agenda by requiring an affordable housing development project to be a “use by right” on land owned by an independent institution

of higher education or a religious institution.

**SB 4** is a straightforward solution that massively expands the amount of land available for low-income housing

construction. California YIMBY was proud to help pass this bill, which was sponsored by a coalition of religious, affordable housing, and labor groups.

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Housing those in need is a core tenet of many religions. But there’s a problem — where do you build it? **SB 4** tackles this problem by opening up 170,000 acres in our state’s highest need areas for affordable homes. It’s one of the purest expressions of the ‘spirit of yes,’ and a powerful tool to bring affordable housing to our unaffordable state.

Senator Scott Wiener





# Builders and YIMBY Lawyers Agree

the **Housing Accountability Act + AB 1633** are massive wins for housing

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The law restricts fee awards for plaintiffs suing under CEQA to invalidate housing approvals. This provision will change the game for those who would abuse environment laws to prevent housing. No longer can they rely on court-awarded fees to finance their lawsuits. This provision should reduce litigation risks for all housing developers, reducing CEQA's potency as a barrier to infill development.



**Dylan Casey**

Executive Director, California Housing Defense Fund

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The **Housing Accountability Act** has allowed LaTerra to process approvals for nearly two thousand market rate and affordable housing units. Before, these units might have taken years to work their way through the approval process, but now we're able to obtain project approvals for this deeply needed housing within as short as 9-12 months from submitting an application.



**Chris Tourtellotte**

Managing Director, LaTerra Development LLC

# Visualizing Policy Impacts

California YIMBY massively scaled up our data analysis capabilities in 2023. We are now able to quickly answer policy questions for legislators and provide visualizations of those policy impacts across their districts. These maps were developed to not only better understand housing issues, but to develop

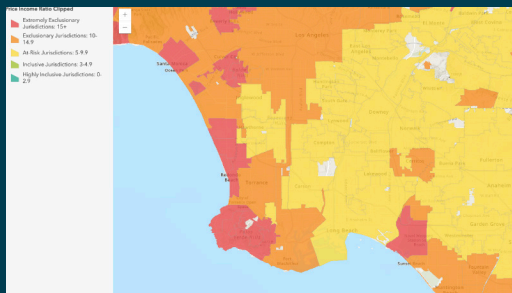
better policy. There isn't an organization in Sacramento today that combines our mapping and analysis capabilities and ability to move so quickly. Providing fast, reliable and evidence-based answers to policy questions is a critical advantage for California YIMBY.

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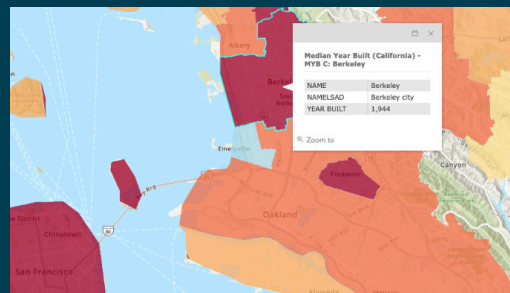
Using GIS to produce visualizations of our proposed policies, we were able to show legislators exactly where and how areas of their districts would be impacted. Our work provided legislators with the confidence to support our bills and explain it to their colleagues and constituents. We are delivering an effective fact-based resource that will pay dividends in many legislative cycles to come.



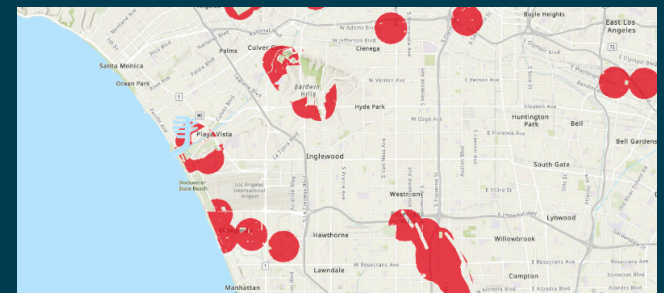
**Nolan Gray** - Research Director, California YIMBY



**California Home Price-to-Income Ratio Map**



**Median Age of Housing in California**



**Map of Active Oil Wells 3,200-foot Buffer**

# Coalitions & Organizing



California YIMBY's 2023 Lobby Day in Sacramento brought together dozens of organizations and over 150 volunteers from across the state to meet with state legislators. The growing and dynamic coalition of pro-housing organizations that span California's political and ideological

landscape spoke to the wide variety of concerns different constituencies face. As we seek to advance laws in Sacramento, it's important that we continue to provide these personal stories and a strong visible presence of the growing diversity of the YIMBY movement.

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California YIMBY's success is directly related to the substantial contributions of our partner organizations. As their involvement has deepened to help us advance pro-housing policies, the breadth of our impact has expanded dramatically, too, touching every corner of California. With our partner's help, a truly affordable California is possible.



**Konstantin Hatcher**

Senior Director of Community Impact, California YIMBY

# Coalitions & Partnerships

California YIMBY continues to invest in long-term partnerships to help secure policy victories and drive alignment across our diverse movement

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Tackling California’s housing crisis is essential in order to address longstanding economic and racial inequities, as well as manage increasingly severe climate change impacts facing communities. Creating opportunities to collaborate with a range of organizations around the state is how we find solutions that will build more affordable, equitable and resilient neighborhoods for everyone.



**Ricardo Flores** - Executive Director, Local Initiatives Support Corporation

## The Housing Working Group

The Housing Working Group is a network of mostly Black and Latino led and serving organizations that work to advance the interests of their communities. Through the HWG partnerships, we help elevate the voice of these communities in the housing policy discourse and decision-making. After several years of collaborative work, in 2023 we introduced and passed a major coalition-led bill.

HWG members, including co-sponsors California Community Builders, Central Valley Urban Institute, and San Diego LISC, wanted to create more affordable opportunities for their communities to become homeowners. To make that possible, together we drafted **SB 684** with Sen. Caballero. Gov. Newsom signed that bill into law and we continue to partner with HWG to refine and expand policies to create more homeownership opportunities as well as advance the specific needs of the communities they represent in the housing space.



# Shaping the Narrative

## Los Angeles Times

Editorial: California has so many new housing laws. Now let's put them to use

BY THE TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD

POLICY HOUSING

### How housing activists and unions found common ground in California

One of the biggest changes in state politics in years, explained.

By Rachel M. Cohen | @rmc031 | rachel.cohen@voxmmedia.com | Aug 21, 2023, 6:00am EDT

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California YIMBY's traditional and digital communications programs have set the narrative on housing across the Anglosphere. Our pro-housing messaging and framing dominate international, national, regional, and local media coverage,

and our digital content is shared across the spectrum of housing policy leaders and influencers. For four years running, we've been quoted, mentioned, or otherwise featured in media an average of twice per day.

## Op-Eds

- [Let's Be Real: Homelessness is a Housing Problem - Santa Monica Next](#)
- [California housing and the environment are often at odds. They don't have to be \(AB68 Op-Ed\) - LA Times: Opinion](#)

## Pitched Editorial

- [Where are all the apartments for families? - Vox](#)
- [California has so many new housing laws. Now let's put them to use - LA Times](#)
- [Gavin Newsom, Please Don't Cut Public Transit Funds. That's Short-Term Thinking - NY Times](#)

# Reports

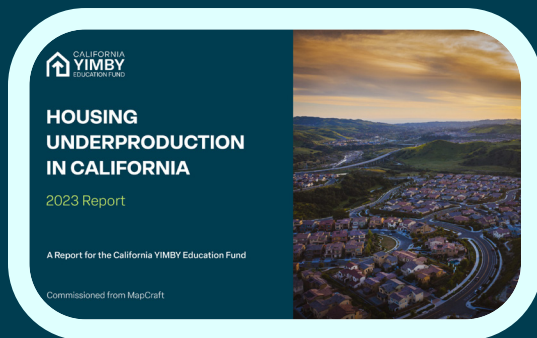
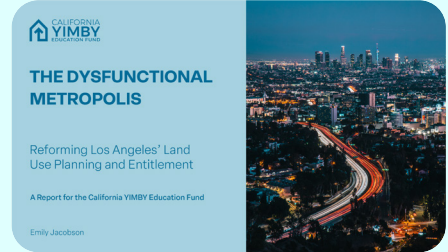
California YIMBY is publishing the research needed to help policymakers, activists, and practitioners better understand—and unwind—the California housing crisis. In “Housing Underproduction in California,” the research team conducted the first statewide attempt to quantify and map the scale of California’s housing shortage;

in “Los Angeles: The Dysfunctional Metropolis,” California YIMBY research fellow Emily Jacobson examined the perils of discretionary permitting, and how it explained news-grabbing corruption headlines. This work elevates the conversation and positions California YIMBY as a trusted expert.

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The uncertainty and costs associated with the current discretionary entitlement process make it much harder for small builders to participate in the market. Large developers with significant capital can afford to take on risk and compete in this environment. They are likely to be more knowledgeable about how to navigate the entitlement process and more familiar with the decision-makers who can approve their projects. Having these connections is invaluable, especially when the City Council is involved.

**Los Angeles: The Dysfunctional Metropolis**

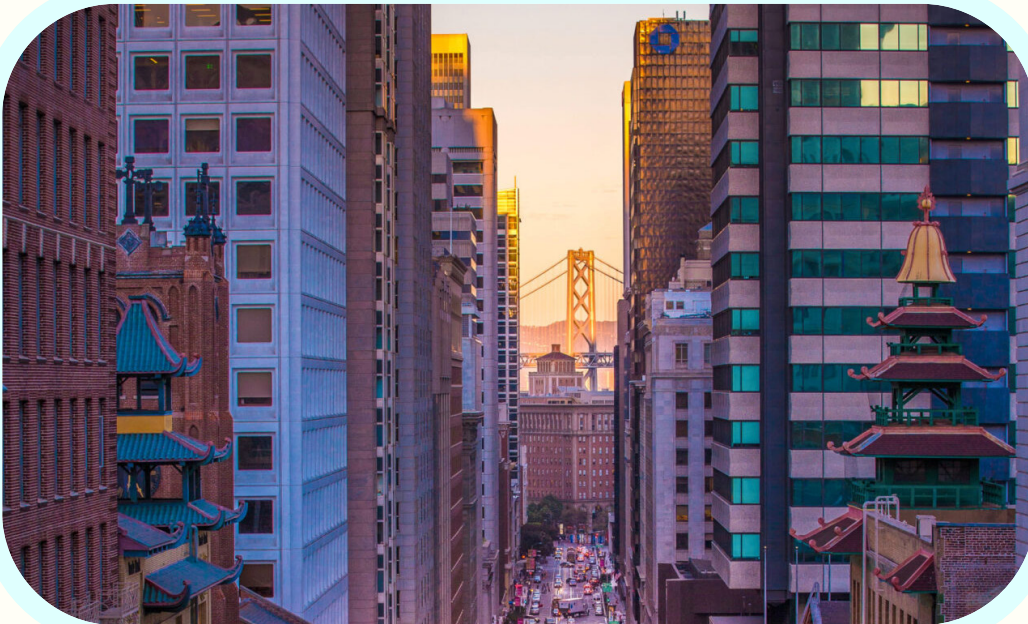


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Based on a recent point-in-time snapshot of market-feasible housing development opportunities, roughly 30% of the approximately eight million addressable parcels in California could, in the absence of regulatory barriers to new housing, accommodate additional market-feasible units.

**Housing Underproduction in California**

# Policy Framework



**After two years of development, we recently launched our long-range policy framework.**

This framework provides dozens of recommendations to the state legislature on how we can navigate California's most intractable crises and help our metropolitan areas realize their full potential.

The first chapter of the framework covers our plan for ending California's housing shortage. But the subsequent three chapters cover related areas of urban policy: tenant protections, housing subsidies, transportation, and other reforms that make for great neighborhoods. While these subjects are beyond the scope of our traditional legislative work, we see them as central components of the broader philosophy that drives the YIMBY movement.

We don't expect to lead on every recommendation in the framework, but the recommendations in Chapter 1 in particular will shape our future legislative priorities. And we will lend our support to other legislative efforts that are aligned with the framework.







Help us legalize more homes!

